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AUTHOR Head, Ronald B.; Wilson, Paul T.
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ABSTRACT

After the historical background and the contemporary issues of freshman composition program evaluation are discussed in this document, six models for composition instruction are described (grammar and composition, linguistics, literary, essay, radical, and editing), and taxonomies for each model are outlined. These taxonomies are compared to data from a survey of composition programs at fourteen colleges and universities, providing a critical analysis of each program's content, scheduling procedures, and evaluation/assessment methods. Although most of the programs emphasized the expository prose model, recent trends in program development reflect attention to contemporary issues: a shift from literary toward essay models, a shift from essay toward editing models, and increased emphasis on conferences with individual students. The concluding section focuses on future research and assessment needs within the context of this study's theoretical framework and preliminary findings. Appendixes provide a sample of the questionnaire and a list of questions to be used when evaluating composition programs. (RL)

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A STUDY OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION CURRICULA

By

Ronald B. Head

and

Paul T. Wilson

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Center for the Study of Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

Of the four communicative modes involving language--listening, speaking, reading, and writing--English departments traditionally have emphasized the latter two. The study of literature forms the major part of the English curriculum, although departments also engage in teaching several types of writing. While literary criticism is experiencing unprecedented success and prestige (some critics believe criticism to be the major literary genre of the twentieth century), and creative writing an increasing popularity with students, freshman composition is becoming more and more a controversial area. Often faculty complain about the poor quality of student papers. SAT scores, too, have declined for twelve successive years, and students are even less prepared to meet the demands of a more rigorous and competitive university curriculum. Freshman composition is caught in the middle. It does not seem to have done an adequate job so far, yet the task confronting it is becoming even more difficult. Higher education has begun to question its role in teaching writing, but the scope of the inquiry to date is hardly adequate to the magnitude of the problem. Clearly the time is at hand for more systematic and critical analysis of freshman composition programs and their role in the curriculum of higher education.

An awareness of contemporary issues must be mitigated by an historical consciousness of the development of the discipline itself and its place in the curriculum. Our analysis will begin with historical background and continue with a more detailed discussion of recent problems, not only specific to composition but also related to general curricular trends. The literature

today on composition teaching consists in large part of descriptions concerning instructional techniques.

Our next concern will be to present a taxonomy of distinctly identifiable instructional models abstracted from the literature. We arranged these models in a manner to facilitate an understanding not only of historical trends but also of conceptual distinctions between them.

Our models will form the basis from which we discuss the results obtained from a questionnaire sent to twenty institutions. We received fourteen replies. The questionnaire was designed to gather comparative data on composition programs among several institutional types, including private institutions, state universities, and community colleges, as well as to compare course plans, materials, and activities with final outcomes. A copy of this questionnaire is included as Appendix A. The return was divided equally among public and private institutions, but the response from community colleges was disappointing considering their strong and innovative representation in the literature.

While our sample was small, our findings are indicative of general curricular trends in the field of composition teaching. The reason for this, we feel, is that our study is rooted in history as well as in current literature. However, we regard our findings as only a preliminary step toward a comprehensive survey of national scope which we hope to undertake in the near future.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Often those who bemoan the quality of student writing fail to realize that English as a discipline did not gain respectability in the university until roughly 1900. In the colonial period, for example, Meriwether points out that composition occupied an insignificant place in the total curriculum. "The memorizing of rules of grammar, lifeless parsing, with a mere breath of linguistics proper and phonology," he claims, "about contained the sum total of requirement in formal English."[1] One reason for this is that until the mid-eighteenth century English was not even the official language of higher education.[2] When English did gain acceptance, what little study occurred was incorporated into the larger realm of rhetoric, a subject based upon classical principles and emphasizing oratory to a greater extent than written expression. Despite attempts at reform in the first half of the nineteenth century, the first professorship of English was only established in 1844. Others followed in rapid succession.[3] After the Civil War, the rise in English studies paralleled such other curricular trends as the expansion of foreign languages and the natural sciences, increasing specialization, influenced by the German ideal, and the elective system. However, the two dominant trends in English were philology and literature. Composition played a subsidiary role to these two areas--as it still does today.

As English gained academic respectability at the turn of the century, it became increasingly characterized as the study of literature. A general curricular trend at this time was for certain subjects, traditionally part of the college curriculum, to be moved down into secondary schools. In fact, the high school

curriculum became defined by college requirements. Consequently, college educators felt that grammar and composition were the primary responsibility of high schools and literature the province of the university. In response to this trend, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) was founded in 1911. The Hosic Report of 1917, sponsored by the National Joint Committee on English, argued that the preparatory function was a small part of the college English curriculum and, instead, English courses should "develop students' writing skills functionally."[4] After 1917, the NCTE was primarily concerned with establishing and propagating systematic rules of grammar as the basis of good writing.[5] While the influence of NCTE was largely felt in secondary education, their attitude toward composition has since proved pervasive in colleges as well.

Junior colleges were among the first to stress the importance of composition in postsecondary education, especially after 1920 when they began to gain a sense of their distinct identity. Whitney found in 1928 that of thirty public and private junior colleges surveyed, all offered freshman rhetoric while only twenty-two offered surveys of British literature. Eells, surveying 279 junior colleges in 1931, found that 270 offered freshman composition and 273 offered courses in literature. This began a pattern culminating today in the dominance of composition courses in the community college English curriculum.[6]

After World War II certain innovations began to creep into the English curriculum. Remedial programs began to spread from one campus to another, reading and writing labs sprang up, and theories of functional grammar grew in reaction to what was

perceived as the rigidity of traditional grammar. Many of these innovations led institutions in the early 1950's to move toward communications courses, which, according to Laser, were "the most publicized and the most disputed change in the teaching of English composition during the past decade."[7] Originally developed by Stephens College in 1940, communications courses emphasized reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, adhered to the philosophy that any means are acceptable for improving skills, and gave students more control over their learning activities. In effect, these courses were forerunners of the current emphasis upon behavioral theory as an instructional technology: self-pacing, performance objectives, modular units, and personalizing.

The advent of the Sputnik era in 1957 drew public attention to America's inadequate instructional technology in the face of the Soviet threat, and demands arose for reappraisal of our educational system. School desegregation, brought on by the Civil Rights Movement, also affected education by making college accessible to those whose low proficiency in standard English created new demands for the language skills necessary to succeed in a meritocracy.[8] The arrival of the non-traditional student on campus had little direct effect on the academic curriculum at first; since then, however, its impact has been immense. According to Patricia Cross, "what started as a simple approach to equality through lowering the access barriers to colleges has turned into an educational revolution involving all of higher education. The revolution has reached the heart of the educational enterprise--the instructional process itself."[9]

In English, innovations had few advocates in the late 1950's and literature remained the dominant area of study in colleges and universities. Partly this can be ascribed to what Jencks and Riesman call meritocracy, the idea that notable academic achievement is intrinsically related to "getting ahead in life."[10] High standards of academic achievement and the downward shift of specialized knowledge into the first two years of the college curriculum led many English educators to feel that composition was a basic requirement for entrance into college and not an area of study in itself. Freshman composition courses were felt to serve a remedial function, drawing for their student population those who failed to meet the competence requirements established by individual institutions. Kitzhaber noted in his 1963 study that English departments seemed prepared to abandon composition after observing "a minimum standard of correctness in written English—as though mere correctness were all that one should teach in a composition course, as though correct writing were necessarily the same as good writing."[11] The University of Chicago, for example, eliminated freshman composition in 1965 and has only reinstituted it this past year.[12]

Enough programs remained, however, so that Bonnie Nelson could report in 1968 upon the prevalence of broader philosophies than mere "correctness." In her study, the most comprehensive to date, she distinguishes three main approaches to composition teaching: the "practical," the "old liberal," and the "new liberal." The practical approach emphasizes review of grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, critical analysis of reading passages, and structural development of sentences and paragraphs. The

hard data provided by Nelson demonstrates that the study of literature is the main area of application for the practical approach. The construction of student essays is predicated upon the analysis of literary selections. The Old Liberal approach stresses concepts of rhetoric over mere mechanics. Fundamental principles of clarity and argumentation are considered to be prerequisite to effective writing. Modes of discourse are "tools" by which a student is to learn such basic techniques of expository writing as summary, narration, imitation, and comparison and contrast. In effect, the essay models are often studied as literature rather than as models for students to emulate. The doctrine behind the New Liberal, the most "radical" of Nelson's three approaches, is that individual creativity should be fostered in the classroom, and that experimentation, innovation, and flexibility should be encouraged. Specific techniques include free writing, experience-based composition, a tolerance of dialects, and an increased student voice in classroom management.[13]

New Liberal practices, clearly a reaction to meritocracy, were largely confined to community colleges, although they never gained widespread acceptance even there. Most four-year colleges and universities employed either practical or Old Liberal approaches. Twenty-five per cent of all programs examined by Nelson were practical (literature-centered), thirty-seven per cent Old Liberal (rhetoric-centered), and thirty-eight per cent a combination of the two (rhetoric-as-literature). These programs, in other words, required a substantial amount of reading to teach writing, which Nelson saw as an increasing trend.[14]

Nelson's conclusion is understandable considering the rise of literary criticism and its dominance in English departments. However, analysis of the relevant literature and of academic and social events since 1968 show her projection to be not entirely accurate. While many universities still employ the literature-based approach, changes have occurred and more substantial ones are still to come. The social forces of the Sputnik era and the advent of the non-traditional student have had their inevitable, if gradual, impact on academic attitudes and on instructional technology. By the same token, economic recession in the 1970's has accelerated public demands for accountability in education. "The twelve-year-long decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores . . . especially sharp in verbal skills," might not have seemed too newsworthy to English professionals in the university, but Newsweek thought otherwise and focused national attention on the problem with its December 8, 1975, cover story, "Why Johnny Can't Write."[15] The article provides a useful general picture, not only noting strategies adopted by some universities to combat the problem, but also pinpointing the "standard English versus dialects" issue as a crucial one. In our next section, we shall detail some of the contemporary issues related to problems in composition teaching.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN COMPOSITION TEACHING

If declining SAT scores are symptoms of diseased writing, the bewildering range of prescriptions advocated by "specialists" indicates a lack of proper diagnosis. Although symptomatic treatment may be appropriate for individual cases, more sophisticated diagnosis, consultation, perhaps even radical surgery, are necessary, since the disease is not located at the extremities of either content or method, but rather at the core of the writing curriculum itself, the assumed relationship between reading and writing.

Most people believe that reading and writing have an intrinsic relationship. Both are communicative acts involving language, and both attempt to order experience through patterns of words. At this time, however, there is no direct knowledge of how reading input is transformed into writing output in terms of the physical operations of the brain or of the cognitive processes of the mind. Yet the majority of all colleges and universities employing practical or Old Liberal approaches (63%) assign large amounts of reading. Clearly the capacity of the universities for sophisticated critical thinking has not been adequately exercised here. Essentially educators do not understand what they are asking their students to do.

As a result, many of the tasks which students actually engage in have little direct relation to gaining skill in writing. Nelson points out that hardly anybody knows how to use literature to teach composition.[16] Certainly, literary analysis of a novel, poem, or play probably will not help freshmen with problems in their own writing. And there is

little guarantee that the skills gained in this approach will be portable enough to be useful in other courses.

Because many classes do not deal explicitly with how to write, the teacher must fall back on grammar and mechanics as evaluative standards. In some programs, grammar is not taught in any explicit fashion; then, the student is evaluated on material completely external to the major teaching thrust of the course. In our opinion, this is a contradictory procedure. Other programs do teach grammar, but the research findings dispute such a policy. As Braddock states,

> In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing.[17]

The mainstay of the rhetorical approach, imitation of essay models, is also subject to question. To imitate, students must understand what they are imitating and thus must analyze the models. But analysis, a complex process involving sophisticated recognition skills, does not lead directly to synthesis except for the most advanced students. The more types of models the student must deal with, the more analysis he must perform, with little chance to apply even a few of the concepts he might acquire. Professional writers study writing as craftsmen. They gain their craft partly from imitation, but only gradually with much practice over a period of years. They do not assimilate all the basics in a fourteen-week semester. Students may well learn to recognize "good" prose, but as Braddock points out,

"it is fair to say that almost nothing has been proved in a scientific sense about the rhetorical aspects of written composition."[18] In fact, he notes as a basic, yet unexplored, research area, "the effects of various kinds and amounts of reading on the quality and kinds of writing a person does."[19]

The New Liberal approach is commendable for its emphasis upon the student's individuality and creativity. Nevertheless it suffers from the same malady as do many of the practical and Old Liberal programs--namely, it is content-centered and the content itself is tenuous, ranging from empirical observations concerning the student's own experiences to intimate self-revelation and confession. The student's attention is not devoted in large part toward the skills of writing; rather, his life and experiences are substituted for literary selections or prose models, and instead of mimicking his betters, he exposes himself to the delight of his teacher.

A further drawback to the New Liberal approach is that not all students are ready for self-revelation or able to carry it out with any more skill than they could imitations of prose models. Indeed, many are uncomfortable in an environment without restraints and perform only according to minimal standards. Still a further problem is evaluation. How can a teacher constructively "criticize" a student's personal expressions of identity or feeling?

Lest our discussion seem too polemical, we must note that the problems pointed out emerge from the theories behind the instructional methods and represent external constraints placed upon the human interaction between teacher and student. Certainly, there are other areas of the curriculum equally germane to the

problematic nature of composition teaching. Because the knowledge base is clearly deficient and because little effort has been put into the task, the training of composition teachers is inadequate. At best, this training takes the same form and emphasis as freshman composition itself, but on a more sophisticated level; at worst, prospective teachers are simply neither trained nor equipped to teach writing. The application of the technocratic curricular model to English study has been responsible to a large degree for the growth of literary criticism and for the prestige which critics enjoy today. Thus, graduate departments train and produce aspiring literary critics, who have little knowledge about, and even less interest in, teaching expository prose. The consequences are stated succinctly by Jane Walpole in her 1974 article, "Why Johnny Can't Write": "English teachers don't have the time to teach composition. English teachers don't know how to teach composition. And English teachers don't much want to teach composition, anyway."[20] Or, as Donald Byker, Assistant Director of Expository Writing at Harvard, wrote to President Bok:

> Developing one's scholarly credentials and helping undergraduates improve their writing go only a short way together. To tie primary responsibility for teaching writing on those who court visions of careers elsewhere is to find too often the failure promised: "No man can serve two masters."[21]

While no single person, institution, or idea can be singled out for blame, it is clear that the most influential factor involved concerns the predominance of literary research at the advanced graduate level. If scholars deal with the actual writing process at all, they do so only tangentially in commenting upon the

stylistic peculiarities of acknowledged "masters," or in more sophisticated bibliographic study, which investigates the relationship between written draft and printed text. Although recent attention to the problem may cause profound changes in English research, needed studies in composition simply do not exist at this time. As Braddock states,

> Today's research in composition, taken as a whole, may be compared to chemical research as it emerged from the period of alchemy: some terms are being defined usefully, a number of procedures are being refined, but the field as a whole is laced with dreams, prejudices, and makeshift operations.[22]

While Braddock's study was published in 1963, we believe that the picture he presented is an accurate reflection of the situation prevailing in most colleges and universities until at least 1973. What little substantial research there is has been performed--if not always effectively applied--at the elementary, secondary, and community college levels. Brown's A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on the Teaching of Freshman Composition in Two- and Four-Year Colleges (1975) surveyed some of the significant literature since 1963, much of it relatively recent. Among the forty-four items listed in the bibliography, eleven are theoretical or text-and-technique evaluations which are not substantially research-based. Fourteen items pertain to four-year colleges specifically, and nineteen to two-year institutions. Those concerning four-year colleges largely deal with New Liberal programs or with problems in evaluation. A few of the evaluation studies show that independent readers can reach a consensus about grades for particular papers. The majority, however, indicate that a given paper may receive grades ranging from "A" to "F."

The two-year college related items deal primarily with establishing objectives for composition courses.[23] Two-year colleges, then, would seem to be more directly in tune with the social trend towards accountability.

The failure of college programs to attend to and produce relevant research has also affected concepts of the role which freshman composition plays in the curriculum. According to Paula Johnson of Yale,

> One problem is the tension between the course's dual aims--to introduce literature and modern techniques of interpretation while trying to develop writing skills, sometimes at an elementary level. The second problem is the wide diversity of students' needs and interests.[24]

The issue in question here, the relationship between freshman composition and other courses in the curriculum, bears something of its resolution within its own framework. Literary criticism skills have no intrinsic relation to the skills involved in good writing; and today's pragmatic student may be motivated to pursue what has the most utility for him. Clearly, the basic curricular functions of freshman composition must be researched and reassessed with these facts in mind.

Our own research efforts have been devoted to collecting data about actual practices on the contemporary scene. Our findings show that reassessment is beginning and changes are occurring. Nelson's three categories--practical, Old Liberal, and New Liberal--were sufficient for 1968, but we feel that they are too general to understand contemporary developments. In our next section, we shall outline six instructional models which not only are necessary to fully comprehend recent trends,

but also aid in clarifying the history of composition teaching to date.

SIX MODELS FOR COMPOSITION TEACHING

Instructional models for composition have been examined previously with categories so broad as to obscure real differences between methods. The taxonomy presented here is intended, through its greater specificity, to facilitate an understanding of the historical relations and an analysis of the conceptual distinctions between the major identifiable approaches. For the sake of clarity, we present each model as composed of the ideal features of a particular theory. In practice, the models do not emerge as so necessarily distinct--features of one may overlap with those of another. We wish to distinguish the hybrids from their ancestry and display each model in its most coherent outline. On page sixteen is a chart which shows our taxonomy at a glance, and aids comparisons among the models.

Grammar and Composition

Although the grammar and composition model is more applicable to secondary education, its influence has been pervasive in the college curriculum, especially in the early years following the formation of the NCTE. Formal grammar did dominate some freshman composition programs, particularly in the early stages of junior college development, and even today it sometimes occupies part of a semester's course. Where it is not formally taught, its effect is still felt through manuals such as the Harbrace

TAXONOMY OF MODELS

	Goals/Outcomes	Emphasis	Classroom Activities	Learning/ Knowledge	Evaluation
Grammar and Composition	mechanical correctness, logical structure	rules, mechanical analysis, small units to large	drill, exercise, lecture	mechanics, sentence-paragraph-essay construction	objective, mechanical mastery
Linguistics	applications of linguistic patterns	patterns of usage	learn sentence patterns	transformational grammar, skills	standards of usage
Literary	critical reading, application to writing	literary criticism, genres	lecture, discussion of readings	skills of literary analysis	mechanics and content
Essay	expository prose	imitation, modes of discourse	lecture, discussion of modes	rhetorical principles	rhetoric, content
Radical	self-expression	creativity, sensitivity, dialect and communication	topical issues, free writing, encounter group	self as source	subjective standards, not emphasized
Editing	quality through revision	stages of writing and revision	discussion of student papers, writing, conferences	writing as craft	objective, completion of stages

College Handbook or Prentice-Hall's Handbook for Writers. The major reason why formal grammar is not studied more extensively is that it is usually regarded as a prerequisite to college entry, so that its teaching is viewed as essentially remedial.

As we envision it, a grammar and composition course is predicated upon the assumption that the correct mechanical usage of language insures acceptable writing. In this respect, the goal of such a course is to instill in the student a knowledge of English grammar and hope that such knowledge will result in his writing better essays. Beginning with individual parts-of-speech and moving through sentence, paragraph, and essay structure, the elaborate artifice of language is presented to the student as vast, mechanical system in which individual units are joined by an intricate but logical network of grammatical connections. Evaluation is based upon objective exercises in which recognition skills are tested, and these exercises consume a major portion of class time. Actual writing is seldom stressed and then only as an activity designed to examine a student's correct application of the principles which he has been taught.

Linguistics

Stemming from nineteenth-century philology, linguistics was influenced by the grammatical concerns of the NCTE--who, in turn, were interested in developing a linguistically-based grammar.-- and has re-emerged as a distinct discipline involving B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky. The few linguistic approaches to composition, however, have been slow to emerge, as linguistics attempts such ultimate questions as the nature of mind. Transformational

grammar, the dominant contemporary theory, is a systematic approach to understanding creativity, the ability of people to say things new and differently. The ideal for composition, then, would be an instructional method which teaches students to say things which are better because they are different. To date, however, most research has been descriptive of variations in patterns. Students in the few classrooms employing this method are led to consider the implications of saying something a variety of ways and thereby increase their sensitivity to language. We should note at this point that none of the institutions which we surveyed employ such a method; examples are reported in current literature, though, and we have encountered two textbooks based upon transformational grammar.

Literary

Since World War II, when literary criticism claimed the status of a distinct discipline in its own right, literature has been the primary medium for composition teaching in American colleges and universities. The principles of critical analysis, applied to literary selections during class meetings, furnish the student with the content for his papers. His own attempts to apply the principles are intended to be an aid in actually writing. Lectures are the major method of instruction, although in recent years class discussions have played an increasingly important role. Both lectures and discussions relate primarily to the particular selection under examination. Weekly themes are graded according to both content and mechanics, but the

mechanics of grammar and structure are purely the student's own responsibility--he is required to have a grammar and composition "Handbook" which he can consult about any problem areas. The relation between the literature studied and the themes assigned may be prescribed by the teacher or may be implicit (a certain number of themes being "due" at set intervals throughout the semester or quarter). Often, there is little spoken communication regarding individual papers; while most professors specify office hours, comments are largely confined to written notes on the papers themselves.

Essay

Certainly one of the oldest communication arts, rhetoric was part of the university curriculum long before the advent of English departments, and originally was intended to teach artful oral discourse. While the student author has often been urged to seek a distinctive voice, the relationship between speech and writing is not yet understood. The classical principles of Aristotle and Quintilian, however, have given way in the twentieth century to modes of discourse (description, narration) and techniques of argumentation (logic, analogy, comparison and contrast), which are somewhat less formal methods for organizing thought. Exemplary models by noted contemporary essayists on topical subjects are analyzed through lecture and discussion in a manner intended to facilitate and encourage student imitations. The goal of this model, clear expository prose, is evaluated in the ability of the student to demonstrate his use of rhetorical

modes of thought in structuring his papers.

Radical

Clearly a reaction to the inability of previous models to effectively teach writing, the radical model dispenses with formal structure and advocates self-expression. Drawing upon the premise that writing is only effective when the writer has a need to express personal thoughts or experiences, radical programs try to break the "writer's block" by involving students in meaningful writing experiences. In this sense, students are urged to write about anything that concerns them. Restrictions concerning subject matter are removed and grades de-emphasized in an effort to promote an environment in which honesty flourishes. Evaluation is often necessarily subjective and quantity is often equated with improvement. The quality of a student's prose is judged only in relation to his earlier work. Students have a great deal of say in classroom management, topical issues often forming the basis for spontaneous group discussions which may last several minutes or several hours, depending upon the enthusiasm and interest generated by the discussions. Encouraged to use their own dialects or expressions in both speech and writing, students spend a large portion of their time engaged in free writing exercises or in composing their own journals. Writing itself is seen as but one of many modes of communication and is considered to be neither more nor less important than any other mode.

Editing

While revision has long played a part, often the most painful part, in all other models, it has largely been a matter of correcting mechanical errors, plus some reorganization, a week or more after the paper's initial submission. Only within the last ten years has the editing approach emerged as a clear alternative in the field, and just within the last few years has editing been taught as a skilled process which the student may practice in a structured fashion while actually writing. The older methods combine lecture with the discussion of individual student papers to discover and develop principles of clear exposition. While the teacher may be well versed in rhetorical principles, the discussion insures that evaluation is at least somewhat a matter of consensus. In any case, students do get feedback from several sources on whether they can communicate what they mean to say, and in addition they are able to compare the work of their peers to their own.

The most recent developments teach students to mimic the practice of the professional writer, rather than his finished product. Most professionals achieve their polished results over several drafts and a period of time. The editing approach assures the student a passing grade if he completes each stage of an editing process such as the following: make a list; organize specifics; develop point of view; correct grammar; improve diction. This example functions as a structured guide for student revision and as a five-stage diagnostic tool for the teacher. While diagnosis of student problems is symptomatic,

it is consistent, highly individualized, and systematic. During class, while students work on their papers, the instructor has mini-conferences with those who are ready to present what work they have completed. Conferences outside the classroom setting are frequently scheduled, which allows the editing approach to enjoy the advantages of personalized instruction.

The sequence of our taxonomy has adhered to the actual pattern of historical development while displaying the approaches as distinctly as possible. Referring now, however, to the chart on page twenty-three, a guide to understanding the taxonomy, we wish to clarify the historical development of the six methods in a discussion of the conceptual relationships between them. Viewed as a whole, the model displays the contemporary scene; its arrangement also represents the historical flow and conceptual relationships between methods. Movement from left to right indicates not only the transition from the past to the present, but also a change in emphasis from form toward content. According to these categories, three main groups emerge from the taxonomy. Movement from top to bottom also illustrates past to present trends, and another form-content contrast which represents elaboration within each of the three groups, and which is most usefully conceptualized as a shift from the artificial to the real.

The grammar-based approaches (which include the grammar and linguistics models) are the most formally oriented, while the literature-based is the most content-centered. The rhetoric-

FORM

Part

(Grammar-based approaches)

↓

Grammar

rules of usage

sentence structure

artificial usage

prescriptive

↓

Linguistics

usage patterns

language structure

real usage

transformational grammar

↓

26

(Rhetoric-based approaches)

↓

Essay Models

modes of discourse

rhetorical structure

formal strategy

descriptive of types

↓

Editing

↓

process editing

revising strategy

student essays

↓

CONTENT

Whole

(Literary-based approaches)

↓

Literature

genre study

thematic structure

implicit rules

literary criticism

↓

pre-/post-editing

informal strategy

essays/literature

↓

Radical

self-expression

unstructured

away from rules

introspective

23

27

based approaches have a combined emphasis and thus fall in the middle along the form-content continuum. Because elaboration within these three main groups has occurred in analogous ways, involving shifts in their emphases on rules, a discussion of the model will aid in understanding how the groups are differentiated.

Grammar is an abstract system (abstract in the sense that the principles advocated conform only theoretically to "real" usage) based on logical standards and rules which may be applied to construct correct sentences. Groups of such sentences form paragraphs, and paragraphs, essays. Students must acquire this logical system of building from small units to larger wholes.

Linguistics, too, has its artificial systems; these have evolved, however, from studying real utterances with a view to understanding relationships between their various parts. Linguistics describes actual cases rather than prescribing ideal practices. On a practical level, it can sensitize students to different ways of saying the same thing and to why (and how) these ways are different. Linguistics has no inherent scheme for building whole essays and remains a "part" method. Both grammar and linguistics, however, do deal in explicitly defined ways with aspects of the process of writing, because they stem from an analytic knowledge base concerned with the structure of language.

Because the literature-based approaches lack the mechanical, analytic elements of grammar and linguistics, they have no real vocabulary for considering the process of student writing. The more formal literary method does deal with writing, but that writing is literature and not of the type which students might

successfully imitate. Students must assimilate a conceptual, critical system with few--or no--explicitly taught techniques at the same time that they are attempting to write. Because the content-centered lectures are intended to furnish students with some kind of example, and because the literary works tend to be considered thematically, the literary approach is a whole method. It does not build from small units; nevertheless, the small-unit system of grammar is frequently regarded as prerequisite and invoked as an evaluative standard.

Pure, whole methods are intrinsically less formal than those which build from parts. Less formal still than the literary approach is another whole method, the radical, which dispenses with literary criticism and mechanics, substituting a simpler, affective emphasis designed to increase writing production. External content is dispensed with and replaced by internal content. The respect accorded to literary works themselves--for their creativity and originality--is transferred to student writing instead, and the content which the literature furnished is now provided by the student's own life and experience. Students may write considerable amounts under such an approach, but the affective emphasis and positive reinforcement render standards problematic and not intrinsic to writing itself. Improvement, in such an instance, would seem a matter of chance. Whole methods alone seem insufficient.

All rhetoric-based approaches combine part and whole methods. The essay models themselves are examples of the whole, finished product the student strives to emulate. Practice in the modes of discourse and study of rhetorical structure teach the student

the smaller units comprising the whole models which he may use to compose his own essays. This method makes sense on paper; however, it still lacks a concrete vocabulary for dealing with writing as such and traffics instead in types and structures of concepts. In effect, this method teaches techniques of thinking, plus methods for organizing thought, and assumes that the writing will naturally follow. It does seem less formal and inhibiting than grammar, yet more explicit in dealing with writing than the literary approach. When, as in some cases, the models are treated as literature, and made the subjects of student papers (Nelson found 38% of all college and university programs utilizing such a practice), the method is less effective. In its purer and more systematic sense, the study of models has been proven from time immemorial as a method for teaching writers. In the past, however, it was not confined to a fourteen-week semester. Most methods would prove effective if practiced long enough and, in any case, would have some effect. If the goal, however, of a composition course is to improve student writing, the essay models and literary approach do not seem most appropriate, given present curricular constraints.

In recent years, two different editing approaches have emerged from the essay models method. Pre-/post-editing may or may not include essay models; if it does, the models will not be as extensively studied as they would under a more traditional method. Similarly, pre-/post-editing may be employed in a literary approach, though of necessity the amount and discussion of readings assigned must be substantially reduced. In its emphasis upon student writing, this approach is similar to the radical. The essential difference, however, is that the pre-/post-editing approach attains a much greater degree of control over the writing process.

It combines pre-writing discussions of strategy and audience with post-writing analysis and discussion of student papers. The pre-writing discussions are an informal way for students to develop their own standards of rhetoric, and the post-writing discussions provide a basis for revision. In such an instance, student papers have displaced the essay models while becoming themselves models, or reference points, for future papers. This change represents a shift toward articulating objectives (pre-writing) and verifying outcomes (post-writing). Since rhetorical principles are implicit, the approach is less conceptual than essay models and closer to the writing process.

Process editing embodies the realization that composition is a skill rather than a conceptual, abstract system. Though it does have conceptual and grammatical aspects, process editing--as its name implies--is primarily concerned with the writing process itself and thus defines itself by an expanding sequence of specified writing tasks leading to a whole paper. In other words, process editing is a systematic revising scheme.

One such scheme is that of Roger Garrison (outlined on page twenty-one). At each stage of revision, student and instructor negotiate about whether the task has been accomplished successfully. In this respect, an orderly, controlled progression toward the finished paper is insured. The progression, while formal, is not concept- or content-centered and can adjust as needed to the student's own thought. Persistent process editing instruction throughout a semester produces obvious results in a short time span. In addition, the advantageous element of personalization enters into the writing curriculum.

Other methods are probably not so damaging to students as our polemical tone might, at times, suggest; however, we do believe process editing to be the most promising development in the composition curriculum, and we hope to test our opinion soon in a further research study. Process editing seems, we feel, to take the best advantage of recent developments in instructional technology. In addition, it is the first method based on the crucial realization that composition is a writing skill and, as such, must be taught in terms of the actual writing tasks involved and not on a mechanical, conceptual, or content-centered scheme.

In our next section, we present the findings of our survey interpreted in light of the categories developed for the taxonomy of methods.

FINDINGS

Our survey was not designed as a statistical study. Accordingly, the institutions were not chosen in a random manner, and quantitatively an accurate distribution of contemporary practices cannot be projected from our data. However, certain significant patterns do emerge, which we hope to illustrate in this section.

We sent questionnaires to twenty institutions and received data from the following: the University of California at Berkeley, California State College at Stanislaus, the University of Chicago, Harvard University, the University of Maryland, Mary Baldwin College, the University of Richmond, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Washington & Lee University, William & Mary College, Yale University, the University of Virginia, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (Richmond, VA), and Piedmont Virginia Community College (Charlottes-

ville, VA). Besides responding to the questionnaire, many institutions sent course plans, syllabi, catalog descriptions, and other rel materials.

We found no distinct grammar and composition approaches among these institutions. However, a few schools teach strictly grammar in their remedial programs (which should not be confused with freshman composition), and the University of Maryland emphasizes grammar on competency exams, which a student is required to take during the semester. Additionally, implicit grammar instruction is provided by the use of handbooks (see pp. 15-17) at Mary Baldwin, Richmond, and VPI. None of the institutions surveyed utilizes a linguistics approach. In a pure sense, the literary approach is employed by VPI and Richmond. It is also predominant at Berkeley, Mary Baldwin, and Yale (though Yale is currently in the process of revising its entire freshman composition program). Literary readings are assigned at Stanislaus, Harvard, Maryland, and Washington & Lee.

Virtually every institution has some aspect of its program related to the essay-models approach, Stanislaus, Harvard, Maryland, and William & Mary giving it the most emphasis. Understandably, the schools emphasizing literature the most tend to de-emphasize rhetoric. Many, however, do teach techniques for library research papers, an elaboration of the grammar and composition approach. At VPI, for example, students are required "to work with secondary sources in the library."[26]

The University of Chicago seems closest to the pre-/post-editing method in their emphasis upon student papers. According to Joseph M. Williams, Associate Chairman, "we spend most of our time talking about writing, using examples from students to

analyze, discuss, and revise."[27] However, most of the analysis, discussion, and revision seems to be limited only to finished papers, so that the "pre-editing" aspect is largely neglected. Nine other institutions, to a greater or lesser extent, utilize student papers as models--Berkeley, Stanislaus, Harvard, Maryland, Washington & Lee, William & Mary, Virginia, J. Sargeant Reynolds, and Piedmont.

Piedmont has the only process editing approach, utilizing Garrison's five-step method for writing. Similarly, the radical approach was rarely encountered in our survey, only Berkeley illustrating certain characteristics of a radical method. Many of the freshman courses there are taught by graduate students, and, though literary in nature, some of these courses emphasized radical principles. One instructor, for instance, lists as a goal in his course description: "students will bring to class written questions provoked by their reading. These . . . /will/ provide the student with essay topics of personal significance, so his/her writing becomes an effort toward self-discovery and not just academic achievement."[28] Other instructors, however, emphasize different approaches, ranging from the "pure" literary (presented half-apologetically)--"the basic assumption of the course is that the critical study of literature can impart humanistic skills of appreciation, awareness, and articulation, applicable to realms other than art--yes, even to the 'real' world of a University term paper"--to a post-editing method: "we will discuss student papers . . . as if they were rough drafts and we were assisting the writers in preparing final drafts."[29]

The approaches we noted and compared through content analysis for our taxonomy were distinct because they were theoretical in nature--"paper" plans, if you will, which can be evaluated strictly on their own terms. In reality, most programs are "bastards"--if for no other reason than the interaction between instructional necessity and curricular structure. It must be remembered, therefore, that the categories we use in this section are no longer normative but indicate areas of emphasis. Our main thrust in discussing the findings will consist of an elaboration of the real, as opposed to the "paper," curriculum. Where relevant, we shall also consider instructional matters.

Joseph Axelrod, in his extensive analysis of the curricular-instructional subsystem in higher education, presents useful categories for considering curriculum.[30] While what he terms "structural elements" only roughly correspond to the curricular dimension of his subsystem, his categories--content, schedule, and certification--prove exceedingly valuable for organizing the findings from the questionnaire. Texts and textual emphasis, the relationship between reading and writing assignments, and coordination with other courses are content-related areas. Conference and referral policies are scheduling matters, while goals, evaluation, and student response concern certification. Although classroom activities is clearly a methodological question, instructional ramifications are rooted in a number of the curricular issues. It is for this reason that Axelrod prefers to consider the whole "curricular-instructional subsystem."

Content

Conceptually, content may be isolated in the curricular subsystem. Technically, it seems to fall between goals and evaluation standards in the certification process, because content is the basic medium through which the curriculum is realized. Involved in content are the knowledge base and the actual materials presented for study. Our theoretical discussion was concerned with the knowledge bases for distinct approaches. Recounting our findings will indicate the fusion which occurs in practice.

Literary programs tend to emphasize examples of genres. Examples are voluminous so that substantial amounts of reading are required. Richmond, for example, demands 1500 and 2000 pages respectively in a two semester sequence. Yale, as mentioned on page fourteen, sees a conflict in its program because of dual aims: in a course where a large amount of reading is stipulated, writing content is necessarily displaced. Washington & Lee, in addition to literary selections, employs a rhetoric text--Telling Writing. Essay models programs utilize rhetorical readings. Stanislaus, for example, uses The Whole Thing, while Mary Baldwin selects two essays per week from The Norton Reader (perhaps the most popular of all essay texts). Maryland employs texts ranging from The Norton Reader (which, they claim, "maintains its supremacy in the field of essay anthologies") to Rhetorical Considerations (which "proves to be exceptional by presenting interesting modern essays in a traditional rhetorical manner, thereby providing illustrative material both for discussion and imitation").[31] They believe that Jacqueline Berke's Twenty Questions is "the best rhetoric reader available," but "of the fifteen or so

rhetoric handbooks which the text committee reviewed this year, Strategies of Rhetoric is the only one which fulfilled most of the needs of 101." The problem with most rhetorical texts, however, is that no single one is completely satisfactory. As the text committee at Maryland says, concerning Strategies of Rhetoric: "even this one, however, is hardly THE rhetoric you've been waiting for." Perhaps this is one reason why the Freshman Committee on Expository Writing at Harvard recommended that The Norton Reader be replaced by Strunk and White's Elements of Style and the MLA Style Sheet.[32]

Both Harvard and Richmond present material relevant to other courses in other departments (Harvard to a greater extent than Richmond). At Harvard, "program officials altered the course format this year to give all students the choice of seven separate sections, each oriented toward a different field"--an alteration which has received extremely favorable student response.[33]

While institutions such as Virginia allow only a maximum of 200 pages outside reading per semester, Chicago requires virtually no reading, employing a rhetoric text in only one section. Such a practice is consistent with editing approaches, which tend to minimize reading because they generate their own content (student essays). Some reading may be useful, however, and Piedmont maintains a file of short essays for specific techniques and problems.

Schedule

To some degree, scheduling questions are related to quantity or complexity of content and to the arranged meetings between students and instructors. Scheduling, in other words, sets the parameters for laying out content. A comprehensive literary approach may extend over three sequenced quarters, as at VPI, or it may be confined to a one-semester course. Institutions may have course-prescribed class meetings for lecture and discussion, and arrange individual or small group conferences only when necessary (as at Stanislaus or Richmond). On the other hand, conferences may be institutionally-mandated. Maryland schedules two, and Chicago three, mandatory conferences per semester. William & Mary requires individual consultation every two weeks. At both Virginia and Washington & Lee, conferences are considered more important than classes. Process editing at Piedmont, a conference-based system, structures mini-conferences during actual classes. In addition, instructors spend many hours each week meeting with individual students. Mary Baldwin requires students to attend mandatory "writing" labs, and Virginia and Yale have similar labs, designated as "drop-in," available to any students desiring editorial assistance. As can be seen, conferences are fast becoming the primary method for coping with student writing problems.

Beyond these sorts of course or conference related mechanics lies another curricular matter that is a function of both content and schedule--the relationship between composition and other subjects in the curriculum. The content aspect has been mentioned above in reference to Harvard's multidisciplinary approach.

The seven expository writing courses offered by Harvard are Literature, History, Fiction, News, Natural Sciences, Social Studies, and Theory and Practice of Writing. Harvard also hopes to institute an elaborate computer referral system by which students from other departments can be offered assistance in writing. Such a system would be a sophisticated version of the present referral system, one which depends for success on the uncertain variable of interaction between various departments. Virginia and Washington & Lee have referral services of this nature, soliciting references from faculty members in other departments. Tutors are furnished when needed. The referral system thus involves preliminary diagnosis regarding the need for treatment, as well as implicit certification by other departments.

Certification

Certification-related issues can be staggering in their complexity and are certainly worthy of serious attention, since course and program goals are intrinsic to all certification. Programs with considerable reading goals obviously must evaluate and certify with regard to the student's thought about the reading, as well as to his writing performance. However, in general, evaluation standards are a most contentious area, as research has shown.[34] Standards may range from a quantitative system for automatically grading mechanical errors to a qualitative and subjective assessment by the instructor. Grades may be based upon whole series of objective tests or merely upon one term paper. While traditionalists may advocate rigorous standards, proponents of a more "radical" philosophy may opt for little, if

any, evaluation.

One major problem with evaluation, in all cases, is to achieve a high degree of objective standardization. In this respect, many institutions prescribe standards for course evaluation. VPI presents its students with an explicit statement of departmental guidelines for evaluation. Behavioral objectives are specified and grading criteria listed. The broad objective for English 1121, for instance, is "to cultivate in the student an understanding of the various types of non-fiction prose; to develop the student's ability to write non-fiction prose (5 required writing assignments)," and the criterion for a grade of "C" is as follows:

> The average paper will receive a grade of C. It has a central idea organized clearly enough to convey its purpose to the reader. It avoids serious errors in the use of English. It may, in fact, have few correction marks on it, but it lacks the vigor of thought and expression which would entitle it to above average rating.[35]

Maryland has similar "rule-of-thumb tests" for grading student papers. Formulated by Betsy Cohn, these basically fall into four categories: 1. "Check for a clearly stated thesis--if a paper has no TS, it probably cannot receive higher than a C-"; 2. "check each paragraph for its structure, for topic sentences with controlling idea, development, logical sequence of development"; 3. "check diction--levels of generality, etc."; 4. "check the introduction paragraph--does it establish a need for the paper to be written? an inadequate intro. is a test for a B paper."[36]

While Piedmont's instructors confer regularly but informally during the quarter to discuss evaluation, William & Mary schedules meetings for its instructors to develop a consensus. Maryland

presents a course specifically for its "T. A. graders," English 611. Richmond publishes grade distribution statistics for all instructors, thus encouraging at least a quantitative basis for consensus.

Our findings indicate that, in general, most emphasize expository prose (as at Stanislaus, Chicago, or William & Mary), competency in prose (Maryland), or direct, simple prose (Washington & Lee). E. D. Hirsch's informal statement on the ideology and aims of the ENWR 1 program at Virginia is revealing in this context:

> The aims of the course have been set for us by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, not by the English Department. Our colleagues in Arts and Sciences have made it the only required course in the curriculum. Those of us who recall their deliberations before the vote remember that they wished mainly to ensure an acceptable level of student writing in examinations, lab reports, short papers and term papers. Whatever our view of this utilitarian goal, we should recognize that it is a goal shared also by most of our students. We are the professional servants of these two interest groups, who in this case, share more or less the same ideology . . . . One difficulty we have always faced is that nobody has defined what "acceptable writing" means when applied to exams, lab reports, and course papers. . . . What our colleagues really want, of course, is writing that is less painful and depressing for them to read. Acceptable prose in course papers really means readable prose. The aim of the course is to teach the skill [our emphasis] of writing readable prose.[37]

Harvard students enthusiastically support a similar idea in their report on composition:

> Expository Writing is, after all, above all a writing course; the special topics serve merely as foci for the students' writing. It therefore seems unnecessary that the instructors be experts in any particular specialized areas; they need only be skilled in teaching writing.[38]

The point is unequivocal: writing is a skill that students wish to acquire. Writing skills, therefore, should be taught, and clearly, if the program is coherent, it is writing skills that should be the primary object of evaluation and certification.

Certification functions at the beginning of a course and throughout the semester, as well as being a ticket for graduation. In the sense of negative certification, SAT or other objective test verbal scores can be sufficient for either certification or guaranteed entry into a composition course. Chicago and Maryland supplement objective tests with their own local diagnostic essays. Numerous colleges have an in-course diagnostic essay at the beginning of a course, which operates to establish objectives for each individual. J. Sargeant Reynolds employs a pre-test/post-test design; the post-test, coming at the end of a course, can be compared systematically to the pre-test, thus establishing a well-controlled procedure for determining how much students have actually learned. Maryland structures grammatical objectives with the use of competency exams the student must pass in order to pass the course.

Because evaluation during a course is part of the necessary process toward the final stamp of approval, certification must be regarded as a complex process encompassing instructional strategy. At present, we shall not investigate this matter in depth, although it is worthy of further study. However, the entire concept of certification not only implies a necessary coherence from aims and goals through content and instruction to final outcomes, but it also invites consideration of how broad limits should be extended for aims and content.

Student response represents clientele certification of the product and can have considerable impact on the curricular subsystem. Student demand at Harvard, channeled through the Freshman Committee on Expository Writing, was the single dominant factor leading to the formation of multidisciplinary content-based writing courses (see pp. 33 and 35). Chicago, which had eliminated freshman composition courses ten years ago, reinstated them this year, largely as the result of student demand. In fact, the freshman composition program at Chicago is scheduled for expansion next year. Yale found such a demand for expository writing that eight of its fifteen sections in composition had an expository emphasis. Virginia, Richmond, and William & Mary have formal course evaluation systems. Mary Baldwin's program is "heavily dependent" upon student response and demand, and, since the college shifted to an essay models approach, students "indicate that they are getting more out of the course that they can use."[39]

While some institutions did not reply concerning student reaction, others found an absence of any student response substantial enough to note; this is at least certification by default, for if there were major problems, discontent would undoubtedly surface. In other cases, however, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction can be posited with any degree of certainty. Ideally, a comprehensive survey of composition curricula would make some provisions for surveying student demand, response, and influence.

Change

Student opinion, far from being the only impetus for change, is just one factor that bears a relationship to the ferment characterisitc of the discipline as a whole. Three major curricular shifts are discernible from our findings: from literature-based approaches toward essay models, from essay models toward editing, and the increasing emphasis, already mentioned, on conferences as the primary method for dealing with student writing problems. The trend toward conferences is related to the trend toward editing and can be viewed, in part, as a function of it.

Schools with literary approaches do make some allowance, if informal, for conferences; however, several which teach literature in composition courses have recently reassessed their programs. Mary Baldwin, for instance, has "abandoned the effort to teach creative literature in the composition course, and /has/ become more orthodox and conservative in teaching writing, assigning much less rarefied subjects than previously."[40] Yale's freshman composition has traditionally been literary but, according to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Paula Johnson, "At this moment of time, Yale simply doesn't have an English composition program. All we have is an as yet uncoordinated collection of plans and proposals."[41] However, as previously mentioned, Yale is revising its program and, from the concern shown by professors such as Ms. Johnson, it would seem that the program would be soundly formulated and implemented. Washington & Lee, also traditionally literary, now emphasizes student proficiency in composition. William & Mary is in the fifth year of its change from a combined essay and literature approach to a combined essay and pre-/post-

editing program.

The University of Virginia has moved from a mélange of approaches five years ago (including everything from "grammar" to "radical") through a more essay-oriented stage to an editing approach emphasizing conferences. Some sections of freshman composition have no scheduled class meetings, consisting entirely of individual tutorials. Harvard has engineered a twofold change in its composition curriculum: the first has been away from literature toward content relevant to other disciplines, and the second has been to de-emphasize content somewhat and discuss student papers (which represents a shift toward editing). The Harvard program is still involved in self-exploration and re-definition, so that the final picture has not yet emerged with any sense of clarity. Piedmont, the only school to attempt process editing, has just adopted the approach during the current year, and it still retains some of the aims of its previously essay-based program.

This completes the description of our findings. The final section of our paper will present a brief summary of the more basic conclusions to be drawn from the findings.

CONCLUSIONS

Major identifiable trends in composition teaching, as we have presented them, may be understood in terms of Dr. Samuel E. Kellams' chart, Summary of Curricular Models.[42] The literary approach fits the technocratic model in that students are considered to be apprentice experts in the critical profession and are taught, essentially, techniques of literary scholarship.

Essay models, with their rhetorical background, fall into the traditional category because they transmit an ancient cultural heritage in addition to emphasizing discipline of the mind. Editing approaches are clearly related to the neo-progressive movement because of their co-operative reflection upon direct experience. The trends we observed, then, represent two movements in terms of the curricular models: from technocratic to traditional, and from traditional to neo-progressive.

Such categorizing of the approaches to composition may be disputed. The literary approach in particular would seem to be traditional because of its content. Our point, however, is that a distinction must be made between the literary selections themselves and literary criticism. In one sense, the method (criticism) applied to the content (literature) subsumes it, forming in turn its own content (literary criticism). Students are taught writing in accordance with ^this specific genre and not as a more general skill. Thus, literary criticism is more clearly related to the technocratic nature of scholarly method than it is to the humanistic and broad nature of the traditional method.

A similar point may be made concerning editing approaches. They are technological in their attempt to develop writing as a skill, but they are traditional in that most of the skills relating to writing, other than grammar, are of a conceptual nature involving exercise and discipline of the mind.

What we are trying to make clear in the above classification are areas of emphasis in actual content, in the sense that Axelrod uses the term. Conclusions concerning the composition curriculum may also be drawn in relation to Axelrod's other two terms, schedule

and certification. For those institutions that wish to maintain a content-centered approach (literary or disciplinary), the scheduling of more conferences could well prove to be a viable solution, as well as a commendable move toward individualizing instruction. Obvious results would appear sooner, we feel, if content external to the actual writing itself were de-emphasized at the same time that more conferences were scheduled--though certainly this is an area for further study. In any case, better publicized "drop-in" labs and more formalized and required referral services are definite, positive, and feasible steps almost any program might take to cope with complaints about the quality of student writing.

Obviously, if the need is for better writing, writing should be taught and writing should be evaluated and certified. Specifically, each institution should conduct interdepartmental seminars for evaluating typical student papers at each grade level from each department in order to negotiate, establish, or reaffirm certification standards. Standing committees should be formed to oversee the process. Also, if evaluation of mechanics and grammar is endemic to certification, then grammar and mechanics must be taught, or at least scheduled, in a manner that does not burden the needy student with too much extra work on his own; not only might the work disrupt his schedule, but the type of student who needs improvement in this respect would probably be better off working in a class or with an instructor.

In other words, certification--considered as part of a conceptual system defining curriculum--exerts a pressure for coherence among all other elements in the system. All elements must fit together as a coherent whole in order to meet the criteria de-

manded for certification, because it is only in achieving certification that such elements are actually realized.

It appears now that the most basic research is yet to be done. The relationship of thought to the various communicative modes involving language is not, at present, understood in a manner directly relevant to writing. Clearly, if writing is to be taught as a skill, the abstractions must not obscure the specific tasks which still must be identified and defined.

NOTES

1. Colyer Meriwether, Our Colonial Curriculum, 1607-1776 (Washington: Capital Publishing Co., 1907), pp. 154-55.

2. Section 13 of the first College Laws at Harvard (1642-1650) states that "The Scholars shall never vse their Mother-tongue except that in publike Exercises of Oratory or such like, they bee called to make them in English" (Samuel Eliot Morison, The Founding of Harvard College [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935], p. 336).

3. The first such professorship was established, not at Harvard or Yale or one of the other more prestigous colleges of the time but, rather, at Wesleyan Female College in Macon, Georgia (see Ben Harris McClary, "The First Professorship of English Literature in America," The Georgia Historical Quarterly, LVII [Summer 1973]. Other professorships quickly followed, including North Carolina in 1849, Michigan in 1854, Pennsylvania in 1855, Indiana in 1860, Rutgers in 1860, Yale in 1863, Northwestern in 1866, Brown, Cornell, Illinois, and Wisconsin in 1868, California and Minnesota in 1869, and Princeton in 1870 (PMLA, 84 [January 1969], p. 154).

4. Philip Dauterman, The Teaching of Composition: Rhetorical Perspectives (Agana, Guam: n. p., 1972), p. 156. [ERIC, 1974. ED 095 548].

5. An Examination of the Attitudes of the NCTE Toward Language, ed. R. I. McDavid (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1965), pp. 11-12.

6. Frederick J. Whitney, The Junior College in America, Colorado Teachers College Education Series No. 8 (Greeley, Col.: Colorado State Teachers College, 1926), pp. 115, 140; Walter C. Eells, The Junior College (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1931), pp. 460, 491. The pressure of non-academic students, enrolled in vocational and terminal programs, accounts not only for the community college's emphasis on composition, but also for its being a prime mover for innovations in composition teaching. Non-academic students cannot be taught by academic methods.

7. Marvin Laser, "English Composition in Public Junior Colleges," Junior College Journal 25 (November 1954), p. 133.

8. McDavid, p. 2.

9. K. Patricia Cross, Accent on Learning: Improving Instruction and Reshaping the Curriculum (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976), p. 9.

10. Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic Revolution (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1968).

11. Albert Kitzhaber, Themes, Theories and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 95-99. [ERIC, 1963. ED 020 202].

12. Joseph M. Williams, University of Chicago, Questionnaire from our study.

13. Bonnie Nelson, compiler, College Programs in Freshman Composition (New York: MLA, 1968). [ERIC, 1968. ED 020 939].

14. Ibid., p. 8.

15. Merrill Sheils, "Why Johnny Can't Write," Newsweek (Dec. 8, 1975), pp. 58-63.

16. Nelson, p. 8.

17. Richard Braddock, et. al., Research in Written Composition (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1963), pp. 37-38.

18. Ibid., p. 38.

19. Ibid., p. 53.

20. Jane Walpole, "Why Johnny Can't Write: An Indictment of English Teaching," Community College Review 1 (Winter 1974), p. 52.

21. Donald Eyker, Draft Two of a Letter to President Bok of Harvard (enclosed with materials received from Harvard).

22. Braddock, p. 5. See Appendix B for Braddock's list of twenty-four areas of unexplored territory. As he notes, "Some questions which seem fundamental in the teaching and learning of written composition apparently have gone almost untouched by careful research." (p. 52)

23. James L. Brown, A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on the Teaching of Freshman English Composition in Two- and Four-Year Colleges (ERIC, 1975. ED 100 414).

24. Paula Johnson, "Bonehead English," p. 20 (unttitled publication enclosed with materials received from Yale).

25. Roger H. Garrison, "One-to-One: Tutorial Instruction in Freshman Composition," New Directions for Community Colleges: Implementing Innovative Instruction, 2 (Spring 1974), pp. 55-84.

26. Syllabi for English 1121, 1122, 1123, submitted by VPI with Questionnaire.

27. Reply to Question 4, Questionnaire, by Joseph M. Williams, University of Chicago.

28. University of California at Berkeley, Course Descriptions (an enclosure accompanying the questionnaire).

29. Ibid.

30. Joseph Axelrod, Model-Building for Undergraduate Colleges (Washington: Office of Education, 1969), pp. 3-4. /ERIC, 1969. ED 032 025/.

31. "Essay Anthologies" (an enclosure accompanying the University of Maryland's questionnaire).

32. Report of the Freshman Committee on Expository Writing (Cambridge: Harvard University, n. p., 1975), p. 7.

33. Mark T. Whitaker, "Students Like New Format, Fall Expos Poll Reveals," Harvard Crimson, Vol. CLXII, no. 12 (1976).

34. See Brown, A Selected and Annotated Bibliography, op. cit.

35. Statement of Policies (an enclosure from VPI).

36. "Workshop: Grading Standards and Revision Policies" (an enclosure from the University of Maryland).

37. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Second Draft of a White Paper for ENWR 1 (April 1975), p. 1.

38. Report of the Freshman Committee, p. 7.

39. Questionnaire reply from Mary Baldwin College.

40. Ibid.

41. Letter from Paula Johnson, Yale University (March 5, 1976).

42. Distributed to graduate class, EDHI 712 (Spring 1976).

APPENDIX A

ENGLISH COMPOSITION QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions should be answered as fully as possible and and supplemented with whatever documentary evidence you can supply (i. e. course descriptions, syllabi, lecture outlines, essay topics, exams, or evaluation guidelines). Please do not feel you response should be limited to the space provided on the form. Documentary material, as well as such items as student notes, essays, or exams may prove invaluable. We realize that we are asking a great deal of you; however, in order that productive research in English composition begin, your cooperation is crucial.

1. What goals have you set for your composition program?

GOALS AND AIMS

2. What texts do you employ? Do these texts emphasize grammar, rhetorical principles, essay models, or some other aspect of composition?

TEXTS AND EMPHASIS

3. How much reading is assigned? How is reading coordinated with various writing assignments?

RELATION BETWEEN READING AND WRITING ASSIGMENTS

4. To what extent is class time employed for each of the following: Lecture? Discussion? Reading? Writing? Revision? Student evaluation? Film viewing? Other?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

5. How are a student's specific writing problems determined? Are mandatory conferences scheduled for students?

CONFERENCES AND DIAGNOSIS

6. What procedures and guideline do you follow for evaluating student performance?

EVALUATION

7. Are essay topics coordinated with other courses at your college?

COORDINATION AND REFERRALS

8. Have there been any substantial changes at your college in the approach to composition teaching during the past five years? the past ten years?

CHANGES

9. Has there been a noticeable student response to different methods of teaching composition? Are innovative techniques encouraged in the classroom? To what extent is your curriculum dependent upon student response or demand?

STUDENT RESPONSE

APPENDIX B

Unexplored Territory

Some questions which seem fundamental in the teaching and learning of written composition apparently have gone almost untouched by careful research. This chapter concludes with a list of questions, not considered previously in this chapter, which indicate areas in which future investigators may wish to direct their efforts:

1. What kinds of situations and assignments at various levels of schooling stimulate a desire to write well?
2. What do different kinds of students prefer to write about when relieved of the expectations and requirements of teachers and others?
3. What are the sources of fear and resentment of writing?
4. How do the kinds of writing which adults compose vary with their occupations and other factors?
5. What is the effect on writing of having the student compose his paper for different kinds of readers?
6. At which levels of maturation does it seem appropriate to introduce the various modes of discourse—narration, poetry, drama, exposition, argument, and criticism?
7. What is the relative effectiveness of writing shorter and longer papers at various levels of maturity and proficiency?
8. At which levels of maturation does it seem appropriate to introduce the various rhetorical elements of writing?
9. What are the effects of various kinds and amounts of reading on the quality and kinds of writing a person does?
10. What are the direct and indirect effects of particular sensory experiences and guided observation upon writing?
11. At what stages of maturity do students spontaneously *seek* specific help in improving particular aspects of writing, such as specificity of details, transitions, parallel structure, and metaphor?
12. At which levels of maturation *can* particular aspects of writing most efficiently be learned?
13. Does the oral reading of rough drafts help the elementary school child strengthen "sentence sense"? How does it?
14. What techniques of composition most effectively help build self-discipline and pride in clarity, originality, and good form?
15. What procedures of teaching and learning composition are most effective for pupils of low socioeconomic patterns?
16. What procedures of teaching and learning composition are most effective for pupils learning to write English as a second language?
17. Can study of the newer types of linguistics help writers?
18. Can formal study of rhetorical theory or of logic help writers?
19. How is writing affected by extensive study and imitation or parody of models?
20. What forms of discourse have the greatest effect on other types of writing? For example, does writing poetry help a writer of reports?
21. What is involved in the act of writing?
22. How does a person go about starting a paper? What questions must he answer for himself?
23. How does a writer generate sentences?
24. Of what does skill in writing really consist?